



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 January 1980

Dear Mike,

MINISTERIAL VISITS TO CHINA

You asked for a note on proposed Ministerial visits to China, together with any preliminary FCO views.

You will recall you accepted our suggestion that this Department should take the lead in coordinating the various proposals for Ministerial visits to China (my letter to you of 9 November). We subsequently convened an interdepartmental meeting to discuss the question, at which it was agreed that we should aim for a steady flow of Ministerial visits, and that with this objective all departments would keep the FCO informed of their plans.

I attach a checklist of current proposals. You will see that a number of these are still tentative. But they represent a substantial programme, and a notable increase on last year (when no Conservative Ministers visited China).

There is something of a bunching of Ministerial visits in March/April. This is to some degree inevitable given that there will be at least two, and possibly three, occasions at which Ministerial attendance would be desirable: the Medical Technology Exhibition (12-22 March), the SBAC exhibition (27 March-5 April) and possibly an inaugural British Airways flight to Peking. Unfortunately the dates for Mrs Chalker's proposed visit do not coincide with the dates for the Medical Technology Exhibition and I understand that the Department of Health and Social Security are proposing that this should be opened by Dr Gerard Vaughan.

It is important that the SBAC exhibition should be opened by a senior Government Minister. The Prime Minister was not content with the original proposal that Sir Keith Joseph should undertake this and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is now considering a proposal that Mr Pym should visit China for the purpose.

Lord Carrington has endorsed the proposal for a visit by Mr Fowler in early April (my letter of 24 January). He has also suggested (Paul Lever's letter of 7 January) that the Prime Minister take up her invitation to visit China this year or, alternatively, that he should do so himself. I assume that the only period during which the Prime Minister might be able to contemplate a visit would be the Summer Recess.

Yours sincerely,
Ray Pringle

(R E Pringle)

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Society of
British
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PROJECTED MINISTERIAL VISITS TO CHINA IN 1980

? Dr Gerard Vaughan, to open Medical Technology Exhibition (12-22 March)	9-17 March
? Mrs Lynda Chalker, as Vice President of Tory Reform Group	28 March- 13 April
? Mr Pym, to open SBAC Exhibition (27 March-5 April)	March/ April
? Mr Norman Tebbit, for inaugural British Airways flight to Peking	? April
? Mr Norman Fowler	? (around) 8-14 April
[Duke of Gloucester, leading British Consultants Bureau mission	21-28 April]
? Prime Minister (or Lord Carrington)	? Summer Recess

Possible visits by Mr Heseltine, Mr Parkinson and a Department of Education and Science Minister are also under consideration for later in the year



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Ministers
copied to
Sir K.J. Min A

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 November 1979

In your letter to me of 9 November, you indicated that several Ministers are interested in visits to China in 1980, some as a result of invitations issued by Premier Hua.

It would certainly be sensible to co-ordinate these various visits as far as possible. The Prime Minister would appreciate Lord Carrington's advice on a sensible pattern of visits, and I look forward to hearing the results of his consideration of various proposals through the ad hoc arrangements which you propose to put in hand.

I am sending a copy of this letter to William Austen (Government Whips' Office) and Martin Vile (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

Ray Pringle, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

